

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-15 remain pending. Claims 14 and 16-21 are cancelled. Claims 1, 6, 9, 10, 13 and 15 have been amended.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of exposing a bond pad comprising:
 - forming the bond pad ~~over a silicon substrate~~;
 - forming a dielectric layer over the bond pad ~~and silicon substrate~~;
 - forming a resist mask with at least one opening to expose the dielectric layer over the bond pad;
 - heating the resist mask with the at least one opening to form a sloped sidewall profile in the at least one opening having an angle of approximately 30 degrees to approximately 60 degrees relative to the surface of the bond pad; and
 - etching the resist mask and exposed dielectric layer to form at least one opening in the dielectric layer, having a sloped sidewall profile and exposing the bond pad.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the heating of the resist mask with the at least one opening persists for a time period ranging from approximately 15 seconds to approximately 90 seconds.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the heating of the resist mask with the at least one opening is performed at a temperature ranging from approximately 160 degrees Centigrade to approximately 190 degrees Centigrade.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the sloped sidewall profile of the at least one opening of the resist mask is wider at its upper end relative to its lower end.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the sloped sidewall profile of the opening in the dielectric layer is wider at its upper end relative to its lower end.

6. (Currently Amended) A method of exposing a bond pad comprising:

forming the bond pad ~~over a silicon substrate~~;

forming a dielectric layer over the bond pad ~~and silicon substrate~~;

forming a resist mask with at least one opening to expose the dielectric layer over the bond pad;

heating the resist mask with the at least one opening to form a ~~first~~ sloped sidewall profile of the at least one opening; and

etching the resist mask and exposed dielectric layer to form at least one opening in the dielectric layer that exposes the bond pad, the at least one opening in the dielectric layer further comprising a ~~second sloped sidewall profile similar to the first sloped sidewall profile of the at least one opening of the resist mask~~ sloping from the bond pad surface to the upper end of the opening at an angle of approximately 40 degrees to approximately 50 degrees relative to the bond pad surface.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the heating of the resist mask with the at least one opening persists for a time period ranging from approximately 15 seconds to approximately 90 seconds.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the heating of the resist mask with the at least one opening is performed at a temperature ranging from approximately 160 degrees Centigrade to approximately 190 degrees Centigrade.
9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein the ~~first~~ sloped sidewall profile of the at least one opening of the resist mask is wider at its upper end relative to its lower end.
10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9 wherein the ~~first~~ sloped sidewall profile of the at least one opening of the resist mask ~~relative to the surface of the silicon substrate~~ slopes at an angle of approximately 30 degrees to ~~an angle of~~ approximately 60 degrees relative to the surface of the bond pad.
11. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the forming of a resist mask with at least one opening to expose the dielectric layer over the bond pad exposes only a portion of the bond pad surface.
12. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the forming of a resist mask with at least one opening to expose the dielectric layer over the bond pad exposes the entirety of the bond pad surface.
13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein the ~~second~~ sloped sidewall profile of the opening in the dielectric layer is wider at its upper end relative to its lower end.
14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13 wherein the ~~second~~ sloped sidewall profile of the opening in the dielectric layer has a slope sufficient to facilitate step coverage of a subsequent metallization.

16-21. (Cancelled)